



# — The Power of — Digital Marketing for Financial Institutions

Digital marketing is the foundation for how banks and credit unions grow today. As technology continues to evolve, so do your customers' expectations. They're searching for answers, comparing options, and making decisions online long before they walk into a branch.

That's why digital marketing isn't optional anymore. It's the toolkit for building success. The good news is you don't have to start from scratch. The most effective approach is an integrated, multi-channel strategy that brings every touchpoint together.

This includes your website, email, search engine optimization (SEO), social media, and paid ads. When those channels work in sync, customers experience your brand consistently, no matter how they connect with you.

Every marketer at a financial institution is up against similar challenges: Reaching new audiences, improving the customer experience, keeping costs in check, and proving ROI.

A great digital marketing plan will address all four.



# Why Digital Marketing?

Most customers start their financial journey online by researching lenders, comparing rates, or searching for answers about money and finance. They're going to find the answers they're looking for, the big question is are they finding those answers with you, or with your competitors?

Digital marketing helps your brand show up at the right moment, in front of the right audience. **Showing up at the right spot and the right time isn't coincidental, it's called strategic marketing.**

Unlike traditional ads in print or on TV, digital channels allow you to track performance in real time. You can see which messages resonate, which demographics respond, and where to focus your efforts.

By using audience data like age, location, interests, and behaviors you can refine your targeting and make your marketing dollars go farther. It's also worth identifying your niche. Maybe you're the go-to lender for first-time homebuyers, or your institution is known for serving local business owners. Focusing on specific audiences makes your message stronger and gives you an edge over the competition.

# Don't Be Afraid To Get Personal

Personalized experiences are no longer just nice things to have, they're expected. Consumers want communication that speaks to their goals, whether it's saving for college or financing a new home.

Banks and credit unions have a unique advantage here because you already have the data to understand your customers' needs. Use that insight to craft timely, relevant messages that resonate. That approach builds trust and drives engagement.

# Invest Wisely

Compared to traditional marketing, digital strategies are not only more measurable, they're also more cost-effective. Running newspaper or TV ads can exhaust a marketing budget quickly. Digital tools like social media, SEO, and email marketing help you reach large, targeted audiences without the high cost of traditional media buys.

# AT LEAST HALF OF THE **MARKETING BUDGET** NEEDS TO BE ALLOCATED TO DIGITAL



## Measuring ROI

When it comes to proving marketing impact, digital marketing shines. Platforms like Google Analytics, Google Ads, and CRM integrations let you measure everything from website visits and clicks, to conversions and new account openings. You can connect your marketing activity to real business outcomes and make smarter decisions with your data.

# How To Select and Prioritize Your Perfect Marketing Mix

With so many marketing channels available, knowing where to invest your time and budget can feel overwhelming. Don't worry because we're here to help. While traditional tactics like sponsorships, billboards, or radio can still play a role, they're often harder to measure for your ROI. The most successful financial marketers take a step back to evaluate which channels truly move the needle and how each one supports their broader goals.

Digital marketing stands out because it provides measurable results. You can see what's working, optimize what isn't, and tie your marketing budget directly to performance metrics like clicks, conversions, and new account growth. Below are the core digital tools that form the foundation of an effective marketing strategy for banks and credit unions:

## **Website:**

Your website is the heartbeat of your digital presence and the destination for every campaign, whether paid or organic. It should be visually appealing, easy to navigate, fast-loading, and mobile-friendly. Think of it as your best-performing branch that's open 24/7.

# Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO helps your institution show up when people search for financial solutions online. By optimizing on-page content, improving technical performance, and earning credible links, you can increase your visibility in organic search results and drive qualified traffic over the long term.

## Content Marketing

Customers want helpful answers, not just updates about your bank. Create educational content such as guides for first-time homebuyers or tips for local business owners, that speaks directly to their needs. Use “you” language to make it personal and conversational.

## Paid Digital Advertising

Paid digital ads help you reach the right audience faster and amplify your important campaigns, such as new branch openings or limited-time offers. Use a mix of formats:

- **Search ads:** Appear on search engines when people actively search for your products.
- **Social content ads:** Promote your best content on platforms like Meta and LinkedIn to extend reach.
- **Remarketing ads:** Re-engage visitors who have already shown interest in your brand.

## **Email Marketing Automation**

Your first-party data is a goldmine. Use it to send personalized, automated campaigns that nurture relationships and encourage engagement. Whether it's sharing a new blog post, sending a product update, or following up on a lead after they opened a new account. Automation lets you deliver the right message at the right time, at scale.

## **Organic Social Media & Employee Advocacy**

Organic posts help humanize your brand and keep your audience connected between campaigns. Encourage your employees to share updates and community stories because they're often your most authentic brand ambassadors.

## **Connected TV (CTV) / Streaming Ads**

CTV campaigns let you reach audiences streaming content on smart TVs and devices like Roku, Google TV, Amazon Fire, and many more. It's a powerful way to combine the reach of television with the precision targeting and measurement of digital ads. For brand awareness campaigns, CTV can help position your institution as modern and accessible to younger, digitally engaged audiences.

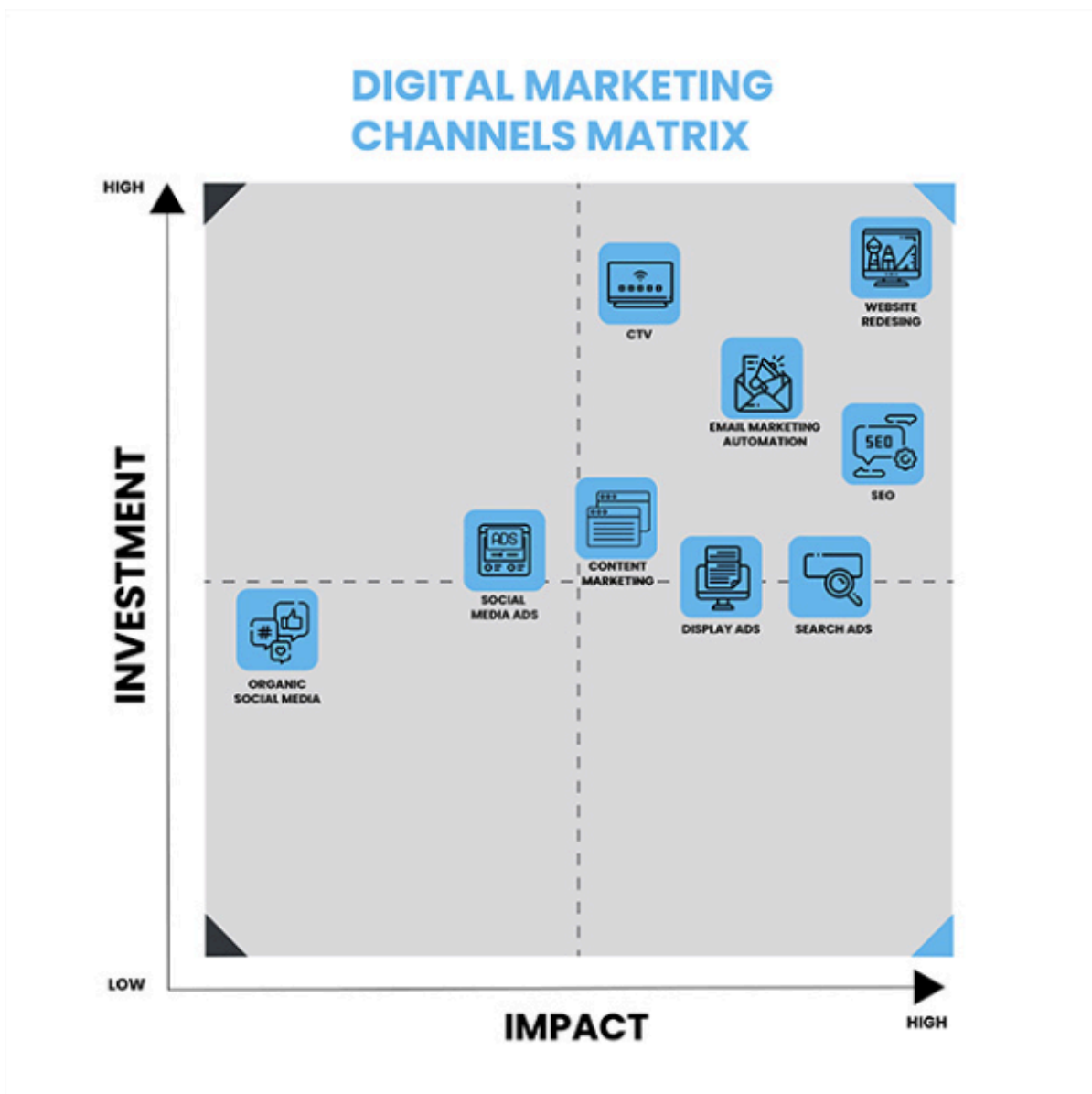
## **Local Listings (Local SEO)**

Accurate local listings are essential for driving nearby customers to your branches. Make sure your bank's name, address, and hours are consistent across Google, Apple Maps, and 50+ other directories.

Managing and optimizing local listings improves visibility in “near me” searches and reinforces trust with customers looking for community-based institutions.

## And so much more!

The list goes on and on, but the eight strategies above will be able to move the needle and drive new inbound traffic for bigger and better growth opportunities.



# Goal-Oriented Marketing Solutions

Now that you've explored the major digital marketing channels, it's time to connect them with your institution's goals. Every bank and credit union has different objectives. Whether that's growing deposits, retaining customers, or increasing brand visibility. Here's how to align your digital marketing strategy with specific outcomes:

## Cross-Sell & Member Retention

- **Email Marketing:** Increase product adoption and loyalty through personalized, timely messages promoting relevant services based on customer behavior.
- **Paid Ads (Remarketing):** Use remarketing and customer match lists to cross-sell complementary products, like credit cards or auto loans, to your existing customers.
- **Content Marketing:** Educate customers on how to get the most value from their accounts and introduce new products that fit their evolving needs.

## New Deposits, Loans, & Banking Relationships

- **SEO:** Capture high-intent prospects by improving visibility when potential customers search for products like checking accounts, mortgages, or small business loans.

- **Paid Search Ads:** Attract qualified leads instantly by placing targeted ads at the top of search results, based on user intent and behavior.
- **Content Marketing:** Build trust by answering common financial questions and guiding visitors toward opening an account or applying for a loan.

## Brand Awareness & Engagement

- **Streaming Ads (CTV/OTT):** Reach digital audiences with video ads across platforms like Hulu, Peacock, or YouTube TV. These campaigns drive broad awareness with precise targeting capabilities.
- **Content Marketing:** Strengthen your institution’s reputation by sharing valuable financial insights that position you as a trusted community partner.
- **Social Media:** Build engagement and loyalty through authentic stories, local highlights, and two-way interaction with your community.



# Website Performance & Conversions

- **Website Redesign:** A modern site improves navigation, mobile experience, and conversion paths—making it easier for visitors to take action.
- **SEO:** Drive more qualified traffic by ranking for relevant searches tied to your products and services.
- **Content Marketing:** Keep users engaged with helpful, relevant information that leads them toward conversion.
- **Email Marketing:** Re-engage visitors with targeted campaigns that drive repeat traffic to key pages, such as loan applications or account tools.

Choosing the right mix of channels depends on your institution's goals, budget, and capacity. A good starting point is to compare the potential impact against required investment, then prioritize the channels that deliver both reach and measurable ROI. If you're unsure where to start, our team can help you map out a balanced, data-driven plan that fits your strategy.

## Measuring Results and ROI

### Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising

Pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns are one of the most measurable forms of digital advertising available to banks and credit unions.

You set your budget, target your audience, and only pay when someone clicks on your ad. The real power of PPC lies in its transparency. Every click, impression, and conversion can be tracked to understand performance and your return on investment.

To make the most of your campaigns, it's important to focus on the right key performance indicators (KPIs). These metrics reveal what's working, where to optimize, and how your campaigns contribute to real business outcomes like new account openings or loan applications.

## Key PPC Metrics to Track

- **Return on Ad Spend (ROAS):** Measures how much revenue your campaign generates for every dollar spent. High ROAS means your ads are efficiently turning investment into results.
- **Cost per Click (CPC):** Tracks how much you pay for each click. Monitoring CPC helps manage your ad spending and ensures your bids align with campaign goals.
- **Cost per Conversion:** Evaluates the cost of acquiring a lead or customer. This is a direct reflection of campaign profitability, and helps you understand if your budget is producing meaningful outcomes.
- **Click-Through Rate (CTR):** Calculates the percentage of people who click your ad after seeing it. A higher CTR usually indicates that your ad message and targeting are resonating with your audience.
- **Impression Share:** Shows how often your ad is displayed compared to your competitors. A strong impression share means your bank's message is reaching more of your intended audience.
- **Conversion Rate:** Measures how many clicks lead to desired actions—like filling out a contact form or starting an application. This metric reflects ad quality and landing page effectiveness.

Tracking these KPIs consistently allows your marketing team to identify which ads perform best, fine-tune your targeting and creative efforts, and maximize your overall ROI. Over time, you'll gain a clear view of which campaigns drive the most meaningful growth for your institution.

## SEO and Visibility Metrics

Search engine optimization (SEO) is critical to long-term web performance. Use analytics platforms like Google Analytics or Google Search Console to measure visibility and growth.

- **Search Visibility:** The percentage of time your pages appear in organic search results for targeted keywords.
- **Organic Search Visits:** Tracks how many users reach your website through unpaid search results, showing the effectiveness of your SEO strategy.
- **New Organic Users:** Indicates how many first-time visitors are finding your institution through search—useful for gauging brand discovery.
- **Organic Conversions:** Measures how many leads or completed goals originate from organic search traffic, connecting SEO to tangible business outcomes.

Consistent reporting on these KPIs helps you understand how visitors find, interact with, and convert on your site so you can refine content, design, and campaigns for ongoing improvement.



## Social Media Marketing

Social media is a long-term investment in your brand’s reputation and relationships. For banks and credit unions, it’s where your institution’s personality shines and where you build trust, share community stories, and show customers that real people are behind the logo. Over time, a thoughtful social media strategy can turn engagement into loyalty and awareness into measurable business results.

Tracking the right metrics helps you understand what resonates with your audience, how social media contributes to your goals, and where to refine your approach for better ROI.

## Key Social Media Metrics to Track

- **Engagement Rate:** Measures how often followers interact with your content through likes, comments, and shares. High engagement means your posts are connecting emotionally and contextually with your audience.
- **Follower Growth:** Tracks the increase in followers over time. This is a sign of growing brand awareness and reach within your market.

- **Referral Traffic:** Quantifies how much website traffic originates from your social platforms. This helps demonstrate how social media supports lead generation and conversions.
- **Conversion Rate:** Tracks the percentage of social visitors who complete an action, such as filling out a contact form or starting an application. This connects engagement directly to ROI.
- **Share of Voice:** Measures your institution's visibility and mentions compared to competitors, helping you gauge brand position within your market.

Monitoring these KPIs regularly allows your marketing team to strike the right balance between storytelling and strategy. You'll gain insight into which content types perform best, how engagement contributes to conversion, and how social fits into your overall digital ecosystem.

## Email Marketing

Email remains one of the most powerful channels for staying top of mind and driving measurable conversions. Unlike social media, where interaction is often passive, email marketing creates a direct line of communication between your financial institution and your customers. Every open, click, and conversion is trackable giving you clear insight into what promotions in your campaigns are performing and where to improve.

When you focus on the right key performance indicators (KPIs), you can evaluate not only how many people engage, but how effectively your emails turn interest into action.

# Key Email Marketing Metrics to Track

- **Open Rate:** Measures how many recipients opened your message. While open rate can help assess subject line effectiveness, it's best used as a comparative metric between campaigns.
- **Click-Through Rate (CTR):** Tracks the percentage of recipients who clicked on a link within your email. A strong CTR shows that your content is relevant and encourages further engagement.
- **Conversion Rate:** Indicates how many recipients completed a desired action after clicking such as filling out a form, scheduling an appointment, or starting an application. This is one of the clearest indicators of campaign success.
- **Return on Investment (ROI):** Calculates the overall profitability of your email marketing.  $[(\text{Revenue generated} - \text{Campaign cost}) \div \text{Campaign cost}] \times 100$ . Tracking ROI ensures your campaigns are financially sustainable and effective.
- **Bounce Rate:** Represents the percentage of undeliverable emails. Monitoring this helps maintain list quality and protect your sender reputation.
- **Unsubscribe Rate:** Reflects how many users opt out after receiving your message. While some churn is natural, high rates can signal that your frequency or relevance needs adjusting.

By keeping a close eye on these KPIs you can refine your strategy to send more targeted, relevant content that resonates with your audience and drives measurable business growth.

# Website Performance

Your website is the “digital” branch of your financial institution. It’s where customers learn about your products, start applications, and form impressions about you. Measuring how well your website attracts, engages, and converts visitors helps ensure your digital foundation is as strong as your in-branch experience.

When you dive into the details of your website metrics, you can clearly evaluate performance and identify where improvements make the biggest impact.

## Key Website Metrics to Track

- **Unique Visitors:** Measures how many individuals visit your site within a given period. Tracking growth in unique visitors shows the effectiveness of your outreach efforts and overall visibility.
- **Qualified Lead Generation:** Tracks the number and quality of leads coming through your website. Measuring both lead volume and lead quality ensures that your digital strategy attracts prospects most likely to convert.
- **Page Views:** Indicates how engaging and navigable your website is. High page views suggest visitors are exploring multiple areas, while sudden drops may point to usability or content issues.
- **Bounce Rate:** Shows the percentage of users who leave your site after viewing only one page. A lower bounce rate often signals strong content relevance and positive user experience.

- **Average Session Duration:** Tracks how long visitors stay on your site. Longer sessions generally reflect valuable, engaging content and a clear user journey.
- **Conversion Rate:** Measures how many site visitors take a desired action—such as submitting a form, scheduling an appointment, or starting an application. This directly connects web performance to ROI.

## Building the Right Marketing Team

Delivering a successful digital strategy starts with having the right people and skills in place. Whether you build an internal team or partner with an agency, every role should align with your goals and help drive measurable growth.

### Key Roles to Support Your Strategy

- **Project Manager:** Keeps marketing initiatives organized, ensures deadlines are met, and bridges communication across departments.
- **Strategist:** Defines target audiences, sets measurable goals, and keeps every marketing effort aligned with broader business objectives.
- **Content Writer:** Crafts blogs, emails, and web content that inform, engage, and convert your audience.
- **Graphic Designer:** Translates ideas into visuals that grab attention, enhance readability, and strengthen your brand identity.
- **SEO Specialist:** Optimizes your website and content to improve search rankings, visibility, and organic traffic growth.
- **PPC Specialist:** Manages paid campaigns, monitors performance, and continuously optimizes to maximize returns on ad spending.

- **Web Developer:** Builds and maintains website functionality, ensuring that pages load fast, forms work properly, and user experience remains seamless.
- **Email/Automation Specialist:** Oversees email marketing workflows and audience segmentation to deliver timely, relevant communications.
- **Social Media Specialist:** Manages engagement across platforms, responds to customer feedback, and builds brand trust through authentic interaction.

Even the most talented marketing teams can't do it all. Today's digital landscape changes too quickly and requires too many specialized skills for one person or department to manage everything effectively. Partnering with outside experts can help fill gaps, introduce new ideas, and provide bandwidth when your team is stretched thin.

The best approach is a balanced one: Keep the work you love or handle best in-house, and trust proven specialists to manage the rest. With the right mix of internal ownership and external support, your institution can move faster, stay competitive, and execute with confidence.



# Budgeting for Digital Success

Before we start talking numbers, a great marketing budget starts with clear, measurable goals. Instead of deciding where and how much to spend, define what you want to achieve and prioritize those channels first.

## 1. Start with your primary objective.

*Example: Increase new account openings or more loan applications.*

## 2. Get specific with measurable targets.

- Grow website traffic by 50%.
- Improve conversion rate from 2% to 4%.

## 3. Break goals into actionable tasks.

- Drive more traffic through SEO, PPC, social media, and email marketing.
- Improve conversion rates with updated landing pages, a redesigned website, and a defined sales funnel.

Most financial institutions like to try many tactics before scaling up. Once your annual budget is approved, break it into a monthly plan that allows for agility. You can reallocate funds between channels as performance data comes in, ensuring that every dollar is driving measurable results.

Finally, treat budgeting as an ongoing process, not a once-a-year task. Review your performance monthly or quarterly, identify what's working, and adjust spend accordingly. The more data-driven your budgeting becomes, the more confidently you can grow your digital impact.

# Budget Benchmarks & Why Digital Deserves Half

Across our recent survey of 40 financial institutions, we found that banks spend an average of **0.11% of their total asset size** on marketing. For a \$500 million bank, that equals roughly **\$550,000 per year**. While this benchmark is a helpful starting point, the reality is that consumer behavior has shifted dramatically, and digital now carries the weight of your institution's visibility, growth, and long-term competitiveness. As more customers search, compare, and apply for financial products online, banks must ensure that at least **half of their marketing budget** is dedicated to digital initiatives.

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Strong digital investment isn't just best practices anymore, it's a necessity. If your institution isn't showing up in search results, competitor ads, local map listings, or social feeds, someone else is. That competitor will earn the impression, the click, and eventually the relationship. A budget that underfunds digital marketing simply cannot keep pace with modern search behavior, rising competition, and the speed at which consumers expect answers.

When half of the budget is directed toward digital, it creates room for the essentials:

- A high-performing website that converts.
- SEO strong enough to compete in local and product-specific searches.
- PPC campaigns targeting high-intent depositors and borrowers.
- Content that educates and builds trust.
- Social media and review management to strengthen community engagement.
- Accurate local listings and reputation monitoring.
- Reporting, analytics, and measurement to prove ROI.

For a \$500M institution investing \$275K annually into digital, this allocation becomes a powerful ecosystem: SEO and content to grow organic visibility, PPC to capture immediate demand, paid social to expand reach, and ongoing optimization to pull every opportunity out of the market.

When you underfund your digital campaigns, the results are: Flat visibility, declining organic presence, higher acquisition costs, and a shrinking share of voice in competitive product categories. Visibility doesn't stay neutral in the world of digital marketing. It either compounds upward or erodes over time.

# How BankBound Can Help with Budget Planning

BankBound helps financial institutions build a digital budget that aligns with goals, strengthens performance, and prioritizes trackable, ROI-focused channels. We work with teams to determine the right mix of SEO, PPC, social, content, automation, and analytics. Plus, we help you allocate funds strategically so you're not overspending, underspending, or spreading your budget too thin across too many channels.

The institutions that invest confidently in digital today will be the ones leading their markets tomorrow. Even modest shifts, like reallocating more budget toward SEO or strengthening PPC campaigns, can create meaningful momentum. The key is to start moving forward now, with intention and a clear plan. Your customers are already online. Your competitors are already online. Digital isn't just another line item anymore, it's the engine that drives future growth.



# How AI Is Reshaping the Future of FI Marketing.

## Here's How to Prepare

Artificial intelligence is transforming how financial institutions operate, communicate, and compete. For bank marketers, the question is no longer “*Should we use AI?*” but “*Where does AI fit into our strategy, and how will it elevate our team’s work?*” The real power of AI lies in its ability to make marketing smarter, faster, and more precise. Not by replacing people, but by removing barriers that have traditionally slowed teams down.

AI dramatically increases efficiency by automating time-consuming tasks like reporting, segmentation, and campaign optimization. What once took hours of manual work can now happen in seconds, giving your team more time to focus on strategy and execution. At the same time, AI unlocks real personalization at scale by surfacing relevant content, tailoring messaging, and matching products to individuals based on their needs and behaviors.

Leaders can also leverage AI for sharper analytics and prediction. Tools like predictive modeling, lead scoring, and churn analysis help institutions anticipate what customers need before they even ask. As AI becomes more embedded in marketing workflows, ethical data use and transparency will play a critical role in maintaining trust. When implemented responsibly, AI gives financial institutions a competitive advantage and enable smarter decision-making, better customer experiences, and more efficient growth.

# The AI Impact on SEO and Search Behavior

Artificial Intelligence is fundamentally reshaping how search engines rank content and how users discover local businesses. While Google still dominates search traffic by a staggering margin, the rise of AI-driven tools like ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Bing Copilot is changing the game. These platforms don't just rely on traditional SEO signals like backlinks and keyword density. They incorporate hundreds of contextual factors, including user intent, conversational relevance, and real-time data.

For financial institutions, this shift means that the old playbook of “optimize for Google” is still important, but no longer enough. AI-powered search engines often bypass traditional SERPs, delivering answers directly within chat interfaces. This reduces click-through rates and forces marketers to rethink visibility strategies. Instead of focusing solely on ranking for keywords, brands must now optimize for **answer engines**, ensuring their content is authoritative, structured, and easily parsed by AI.

Local search is evolving too. Proximity and reviews still matter, but AI is layering in behavioral signals, sentiment analysis, and even predictive intent. For example, an AI assistant might recommend a credit union not just because it's nearby, but because its digital experience scores high in user feedback and its content demonstrates trustworthiness.

**What's driving this change?** AI systems are pulling data from across the entire web. Not just your website. Social media profiles, business directories, review platforms, and even third-party mentions all contribute to how AI perceives your brand. This means focusing on one channel or one tactic no longer cuts it. A strong SEO strategy now requires a holistic approach:

- Consistent branding and messaging across social platforms.
- Positive, authentic reviews on Google, Yelp, and niche directories.
- Accurate business information everywhere it appears online.
- Engaging, authoritative content that answers real questions.

AI is essentially building a **360-degree profile** of your business. If your social presence is weak, your reviews are inconsistent, or your content lacks depth, AI will notice and so will your rankings. This interconnectedness makes marketing integration more critical than ever. SEO is no longer a silo; it's tied to reputation management, social engagement, and even customer experience.

The takeaway? SEO is no longer static, it's dynamic, conversational, and deeply tied to user experience. Marketers who embrace this shift will gain a competitive edge, while those clinging to old tactics risk invisibility in the AI-driven search era.

## Partnering With BankBound to Lead Your Institution Into the AI Era

AI's potential is enormous, but many marketing teams simply don't have the time, training, or bandwidth to integrate it into their day-to-day strategy. That's where BankBound comes in. We help financial institutions bridge the gap between interest in AI and actual implementation, guiding leaders on where AI adds the most value and how to integrate it safely, effectively, and strategically.

Whether it's building AI-enhanced workflows, creating data-driven campaigns, improving segmentation, or streamlining reporting, we help your marketing team work smarter, not harder. Our approach blends expert guidance with hands-on support, ensuring your institution benefits from AI without overwhelming your staff or disrupting ongoing efforts. You keep the work you love doing; we help elevate the work that AI can optimize or accelerate.

Digital marketing opened the door to new opportunities. AI expands that door even wider. For leaders who are already embracing change like modernizing their website, investing in SEO, exploring Paid Search, building stronger analytics, AI is the next natural step. It's not about chasing trends; it's about staying competitive, future-ready, and aligned with how customers now expect to experience financial services.

Your institution doesn't need to navigate this new era alone. With the right partner and a forward-thinking mindset, AI becomes less intimidating and more empowering. Like another tool in your digital marketing toolkit that helps you grow, innovate, and deliver exceptional experiences for your community.

# About BankBound

BankBound was established in 2016 as a division of our parent company PrintMail Solutions. We are a digital marketing agency that works exclusively with local financial institutions. Whereas a typical digital marketing agency needs to learn and remain current with dozens of business verticals, we don't have that issue. Instead, we bring immediate value and relevant shared insights because financial marketing is all we do.

At the time of this writing we work with over 70 financial institutions across the country. We manage and grow over 750 branches every single month. Our partners range anywhere from \$300M in assets, all the way up to \$8B+. We have an average client tenure of 4.5 years (and growing every day.)

Our goal is to provide cost-effective, data-driven results with complete transparency. By supporting local financial institutions across the country, our industry and marketing expertise help to grow these organizations by assisting them in growing their community. It is our exclusive focus on banking that allows us to become a true extension of the bank marketing teams we partner with.

Visit [BankBound.com](http://BankBound.com) for more about us along with resources designed for financial marketers.



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